

Considerations When Identifying New Arizona Courses

Arizona is developing a standardized statewide listing of courses and course codes. It is intended to have the common set of courses offered within the state and, in addition, the set of courses that are offered nationally. The vast majority of Arizona courses should be capable of being mapped to a set of national course codes called SCED (School Codes for the Exchange of Data). However, the Arizona course list should also have courses that are common in and unique to Arizona.

The uses of these course codes include the following:

- Linking of teachers to students taught in a course.
- Placement on high school transcripts making it easier for postsecondary institutions to interpret the content and rigor of courses taken by applicants.
- Placement in student records that go with a student when he or she transfers from one district to another, thus helping the receiving district to make more appropriate placement decisions.
- Comparison of courses taught by teachers to their licensure areas.

The task of identifying courses to add for the Arizona specific list requires that non-matches with the SCED codes be identified. In a preliminary pilot conducted with Osborn School District, Humanities courses were identified as missing from SCED and needed to be added for Arizona.

Some important points to remember when reviewing and considering courses are:

1. Local lists of courses and their codes will be much more extensive than the state list. The state list may allow for more than one course to have the same state number because the courses may be equivalent and cover similar content. For instance, there may be various literature courses that cover a “genre” such as “mysteries” or “Westerns.” The name of the course covers the specific topic, but the state course code (for Literature of a Genre – AZ01061) would be the same.
2. State lists of courses will be more extensive than the national (SCED) list to cover unique state courses or special arrangements such as joint English/Social Studies courses. If the courses have merged content, then they can be included in both subject areas, or the committee can decide on the single most appropriate subject area. Don’t worry about the course number now. Just identify the courses that you believe need to be added to the list.
3. The SCED list was compiled to represent the most frequently occurring courses across most states. These lists were developed a number of years ago, and there may be newly identified topics or courses. If there is an obvious omission, then keep a list and we will submit the course names to NCES for consideration when the list is revised.
4. In the Arizona and SCED lists, there are a number of “Other” options provided. Feel free to use them. The subject areas are at a high level, and there is an “Other” course code for the subject area ending in 999. There are content areas within subject areas such as Chemistry, Physics, and Biology within Science. If you believe that Arizona Zoology should be added to the list of Science

courses, you should decide if it should be mapped to Zoology (AZ03061), Particular Topics in Biology (AZ03063) or Biology-Other (AZ03099). You should not use Life and Physical Sciences-Other (AZ03999) for this course because there is a more specific course that can fill the need. Read the descriptions and then make your decision. If you want it as a separate course, keep it on the list and we will give it a course code.

Course Codes

The beginning point for the Arizona Course Code List is the SCED list with the following format:

4-character subject area code (AZ01 –AZ22). These subject areas are identical to the national subject area codes, but have AZ added in front of the 2-digit code. Additional areas can be added if needed.)

3-digit course code - These codes are identical to the national course codes. If new course codes are desired, they can be added within this coding structure.

An extended set of codes can be used at the local level or at the state level if desired. Other states and postsecondary institutions are less likely to be interested in these codes. Refer to the document called “Elements of the SCED Course Coding Structure and Considerations for Arizona” for more detail. Consider that there may be element space limitations in your student information system where you would logically place the Arizona number.